SISHK
STUDENT PRESS

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All proceeds from this project will be donated to Children's Wishing Well, supporting underprivileged youth — a cause that reflects SISHK's SG60 commitment to giving back and uplifting our community.

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Student Press SG60 Special Edition

Building Our Singapore Together: Our Story, Our Heritage

Foreword

To SISHK Students, Parents, Alumni, and the Singaporean community:

Singapore is a country not unfamiliar with miracles. In just one hundred and fifty years, it had transformed itself from a mere fishing village in the 1820s, to a bastion of free trade that beats firmly in the heart of the Malacca Strait in the 1970s. And in just fifty more, it has flourished into one of the most well-educated and high-skilled economies in the world, leading Asia in e-commerce and global finance.

This newsletter attempts to capture a snapshot of the soul of Singapore. From the Student Press, Creative Writing Club (CWC), and Armchair Specialists to you!

It's of course, difficult to represent and distill the experiences of over 6 million people into thirty or so pages, but we've made our best effort to do so here.

From our perspective, the essence of being Singaporean does not just lie in its trek to become the economic powerhouse it is today, but in the footsteps it has left behind along the way. Singapore is a cultural melting pot that exudes the spirit of inclusivity, acting as a home for everybody, regardless of race, culture, or ethnicity. It is a pillar of human ingenuity; its ascent only possible with the grit and sacrifice of the generations that have come before us. Above all, Singapore is the feeling of pride that seeps out from the food of every Hawker Stall, or from its yearly National Day Festivals. It is also exemplified in the qualities that make up a Singaporean: being welcoming, inspired, and above all, kind. We aim to capture these attributes in the three sections of this newsletter. The first section dedicates itself to uncovering the identity of Singapore, and the second explores its cultural quirks and economic feats. Our last section will cover Singapore in an intergenerational lens, passing the torch to allow the younger generations to shine.

However, this vision of Singapore would've been impossible to achieve if not for the kindness and sacrifice of those in our community. We beg of you to capture this spirit of giving, and to pay it forward to those less fortunate than us. This newsletter was made to support the Children's Wishing Well, a foundation dedicated to empowering children through education. As of today, they have helped support over 1,600 children across Singapore lead better, more enriching lives,

more enriching lives, with 10 locations open islandwide. Their programmes include the “FRESH” and “Reach For the Stars” initiatives, which aim to develop the talents of children from lower-income households, in areas such as dance, swimming, music, and coding.

Mr. Trevor Xie and Ms. Cynthia Tan, their founders, both believe in a world where individuals of lower-income backgrounds can lead their lives with dignity and accomplishment. Hailing from less advantaged backgrounds, they both experienced intense hardship in their youth, where Mr. Trevor’s father worked as a clerk at a construction site, and Ms. Cynthia’s mother was the sole breadwinner, sharing a one-bedroom flat with Cynthia and her two siblings.

Through elbow grease and the kindness of others, Trevor overcame the odds and broke the national record for the Ironman Trialathlon in Singapore, the youngest to ever do so at the time. The Wishing Well was founded by them in 2002, aiming to carry on the vision of student potential for children in situations just like theirs. Like them, the Student Press believes in the talent and potential of every child, and urges you to donate to their cause. Following in their footsteps, we pledge to donate all proceeds & donations received from the creation of this Special Edition Newsletter to them.

We’d like to stress that the wishing well is an entirely non-profit organisation that has only been able to improve the lives of these children due to the goodwill of the Singaporean community. The Student Press is counting on you and the school community to help them continue democraticising education for all in Singapore and in the world.

To a greater and even more unified version of Singapore,
Cyrus Leung & Student Press, Creative Writing Club, and Armchair Specialist teams

1. What Singapore Means to Us

"I have no regrets. I have spent my life, so much of it, building up this country. There's nothing more that I need to do. At the end of the day, what have I got? A successful Singapore. What have I given up? My life."

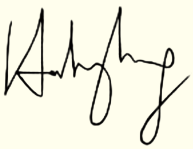
Lee Kuan Yew, Former Prime Minister of Singapore

HENLEY LEONG: ALUMNI - GRADUATED IN 2003

Letter from Henley Leong

It has been a privilege to have spent my formative childhood years at SISHK. The bonds I made with many of my teachers and classmates have been a constant through the different phases of my life, and I am proud to still call this place home despite leaving over 20 years ago. Many memories remain fresh in my mind after all this time, and are testament to the indelible mark SISHK has made to my story. It has been wonderful to grow up together with the broader SISHK community, which has always provided me with a connection to my birth country – a place in which I have never lived, but have grown to appreciate more over the years. Today, Singapore continues to stand proud in a world with much uncertainty, perhaps more than ever before, but can nonetheless look confidently into the future with the lessons learned and steady foundations forged by those who came before. Happy 60th Anniversary!

Best wishes,
Henley Leong, April 2025



ST.JOHN SZETO TSZ LUNG: S2 STUDENT

Building Our Singapore Together: Learning from a Nation That Inspires

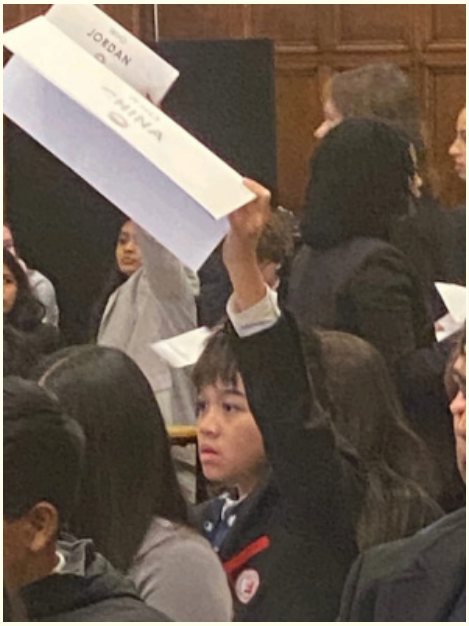
Over the past sixty years, Singapore's journey has been a story of hard work, kindness, and people helping one another. I have come to respect and admire the values this country stands for. Studying at Singapore International School (Hong Kong) has helped me understand these values even more.

At the Singaporean of the Year 2024 award ceremony, President Tharman Shanmugaratnam spoke about how a nation's strength comes from its people. He said those with strong determination and a sense of purpose inspire others to find their path. His words made me think about the people who have influenced me and what I can learn from them.

One person who truly inspires me is Mr. Koh Seng Choon, the founder of Dignity Kitchen. This social enterprise started in Singapore to train and employ people with disabilities and disadvantages. But Mr. Koh did not stop there—he expanded Dignity Kitchen to Hong Kong, helping even more people. His message, "Everybody can do our part to make life better for everyone," left a deep impression on me. He taught me that no matter who we are, we all can make a difference in the lives of others.

Last year, I had the opportunity to visit Dignity Kitchen in Hong Kong and take part in their work. Alongside their team, I helped prepare and distribute free lunch boxes to elderly people in need. Meeting Mr. Koh in person and witnessing his dedication to social service left a lasting impact on me. It was a reminder that when done with sincerity, small actions can bring great change to a community. This experience made me reflect on my role as a student—how I could develop myself to contribute meaningfully to society.

With this motivation in mind, I pushed myself to grow in other areas. I challenged myself academically, trained harder in public



speaking, and took on opportunities that would help me become a more capable and thoughtful individual. When I participated in the Oxford Model United Nations, I drew upon the confidence and sense of purpose I had gained. Through dedication and effort, I was honored as an Outstanding Delegate. Similarly, in the Global Gold Award of the Picasso International Art Competition, I found new ways to express ideas that connect people beyond borders. These experiences reinforced what I had learned from Mr. Koh: success is not just about individual achievement but about how we use our strengths to inspire and uplift others.

Singapore's history is filled with stories of people working together to build a better future. As highlighted in Singapore's national journey (www.sgjourney.gov.sg), the country has grown because of its people's commitment to creating an inclusive society. Mr. Koh's award as the Singaporean of the Year 2024 is a great reminder that each of us, no matter where we come from, has the power to do good.

As Singapore celebrates its 60th anniversary, I feel inspired by the way this country encourages kindness, hard work, and service. I hope to carry these values with me. I have learned so much from my school, from leaders like Mr. Koh, and from the many stories of people who dedicate themselves to helping others.

Singapore's journey is still ongoing, and so is mine. I hope to continue learning, growing, and doing my part—because making a difference, no matter how small, is what truly makes a person and a nation strong.

2. Singapore, Its Features and Quirks, Unleashed

"If it's not on a street, no it's not the same. You don't want your chicken rice pre-sauced and served layered with frisée leeks on top. You don't want to eat it in a sanistied cubicle and not on the street with accompanying sounds and smells. Real street food is our last best hope."

Anthony Bourdain, Acclaimed Food Critic and TV Show Host

CHLOE HENG: P6 STUDENT

Gardens by the Bay

Even after 13 years Gardens by the Bay still remains one of the most iconic places in Singapore with its beautiful scenery including flowers, cactuses and lots of other plants. It has beautiful destine choices that will leave your jaw on the ground from when you enter till you leave; Gardens by the Bay is truly a great part of Singapore's many great scenery places.

This picture was taken in "The Cloud Forest" of Gardens by the Bay.

Gardens by the Bay features an impressive array of design choices that truly enhance its beauty. One of the standout aspects of the garden is its stunning glass art installations, which create a captivating visual experience. This particular picture was taken at the entrance of the Cloud Forest.

The combination of innovative architecture and natural elements makes Gardens by the Bay a remarkable destination for visitors.

LAUREN TAN: ARMCHAIR SPECIALISTS

The Future of Singapore's Hawker Centres

In the movie Crazy Rich Asians, the male lead, Nick Young, explained to his American-born Chinese girlfriend, Rachel, "This is one of the only places in the world where street food vendors actually earn Michelin stars". Yes, this place is Singapore, and we love our hawker food!

So how did the culture of hawker centres first begin? In the 1800s, Singapore was a flourishing trading port. Many immigrants from various countries including China, India, Indonesia, and Malaysia, came to Singapore, in hopes of finding a better life. They brought with them the rich culture and cuisines from their home countries. After World War II, many people in Singapore were left without jobs, so they turned to street hawking to make a living. People could taste different flavours from everywhere around Asia, all in one street. However, the government found street hawking to be unhygienic and obstructing traffic, so they built hawker centres and moved the street hawkers to these centres. This marked the very beginning of Singapore's rich and vibrant hawker centre culture. Over the years, hawker centres have evolved into what we know today. Now, there are over 110 hawker centres in Singapore, with the National Environment Agency (NEA) having plans to establish even more hawker centres in the future.

Regardless of whether they are young or old, rich or poor, white or blue collar, every Singaporean loves hawker food. It is the common passion of Singaporeans to talk about their favourite hawker food! There are many famous hawker stalls in Singapore. For laksa, people will remember 328 Katong Laksa; for chicken rice, others will recall Tian Tian Hainanese Chicken Rice. It was even reported in Straits Times newspaper that the Sultan of Brunei requested for the nasi lemak from Selera Rasa Nasi Lemak at Adam Road Hawker Centre each time he visited Singapore!

Over the years, private enterprises including FairPrice Group, KouFu Group and BreadTalk Group, took it a step further by setting up modern, air-conditioned food courts. This allowed people to enjoy their food in a more clean and hygienic environment, as all food court stalls are required to have an A rating from the NEA's Street Food Hygiene Rating System. Food courts were also more efficient as they introduced the centralised washing of dishes and cutleries. This enhanced the overall customer experience for residents who want to enjoy delicious hawker foods.

But do the young Singaporeans of today see themselves taking up the job of a hawker? The average age of hawkers in Singapore now is around 60 years old. Many hawkers hope to pass down their business and secret recipes to apprentices or family members to continue their legacy. The NEA also encourages new hawkers through projects such as the Hawkers' Development Programme. However, in an article from the South China Morning Post, a former white-collar-worker-turned-hawker expressed this view: "Singaporeans don't want this job. It's not worth the effort to them to make S$4,000 (US$2,950) a month with long hours standing over a hot stove when you can make S$3,000 a month as a clerk in an air-conditioned room behind a desk". Does this signal the beginning of the end of the hawker culture? Or could the hawker culture further evolve through new business models?

Ultimately, although the hawker food industry faces many challenges, it remains central to Singaporean identity and we are confident that it will continue to thrive!

NATHAN LIN & ETON NG: DP1 STUDENTS

Celebrating SG60 Through Geoguessr

As Singapore celebrates SG60, marking its 60 years of independence, it highlights its remarkable evolution from a small port city to a global metropolis with a rich cultural heritage.

An engaging way of exploring this transformation is through the viral game Geoguessr, which immerses players by challenging them to identify locations by navigating through street view images, aiming to pinpoint the exact location they are at. This interactive experience not only allows them to virtually explore iconic landmarks of Singapore, such as the historic Fort Canning Park, where ancient kings of Singapore were said to be buried or the vibrant streets of Chinatown or Gardens by the Bay, where over 10 million travellers flock to every year but also tells a story of Singapore's growth and development blending in modern architecture and mother nature into one futuristic city.

"Through Geoguessr, players can deepen their understanding of Singapore's cultural diversity and historical significance, allowing them to appreciate Singapore in front of them fully."

Try this Geoguessr Map: https://www.geoguessr.com/challenge/euEpSSTZl6EEXJCd

ELIZABETH KWOK (S4): CREATIVE WRITING CLUB

The Taste of a Saturday

It had been twenty years since Peter was in Singapore.

Back then, he was a little primary school kid, the few coins he snagged from his mother's purse clinking and jingling in his pocket as he ran down the street.

He remembered every Saturday, he would run to the tight alleyway that was two streets away from the communal basketball court, sweat clinging to his face and hair and shirt in a sticky mess. He would fish out all the coins from the side of his trousers, holding them out to the grandpa behind a shabby food stand.

Grandpa Lim, everyone called him. The entire neighbourhood recognised him by the mouth-watering aroma of curry that would permeate the streets when he opened up his hawker stand, along with the piercing jingle of bells that he'd use to advertise, as if the scent alone wasn't enough to turn the heads of nearly everybody that passed by.

"Peter, ah!" He'd greet, "Good to see you again!"

"Uncle, one stick of curry fish balls please!"

"This is enough," He'd take only a 1 dollar coin from his hands, "Buy yourself something nice with the rest of that money."

Within a minute, Peter would be served four fish balls skewered together. The thick sauce coated every surface of the snack, its edges so brightly yellow that it could be considered a chemical, a ghost of its turmeric and spice. Drops of it would roll down the skewer and onto his hand, collecting at the folds of his fingers.

He'd lick his fingers clean after finishing the entire stick, savoring the last traces of the rich curry sauce.

"Haha! Want more?" Grandpa Lim would offer with a smile, already taking another stick of fish balls and drenching it in a more-than-generous amount of curry.

Handing it to him, he'd grin, "Free of charge, just for you!" —

Peter could barely recognise his hometown.

Turns out, a country could change a lot in twenty years. His surprise was unmatched when he walked past his old apartment complex, which had been turned into a massive mall with flamboyant advertisements plastered all over its outer walls. He quite literally had to stop in his tracks and stare at it with his gaping jaw on the floor. He didn't even care for the numerous weird, judgemental, what-on-earth-is-that-guy-doing looks that he got from passerbys.

He had an hour to kill before his meetup with an old friend, so he decided that maybe he could find Grandpa Lim. It'd be such a delight to reunite with him after all these years.

After loads of directions asked from strangers and far too many "what-happened-to-that-building"s, Peter finally made it to the alleyway, which now stood between two towering office buildings.

It was empty. All that was there was a green dumpster, a few cardboard boxes littered around it. An uncle, leaning against the wall with a cigarette between his fingers, looked up.

"Need anything?"
"No, sorry," Peter took a step back and apologised, "Thanks for asking."

He walked on, hands stuffed in his pockets in defeat despite the hot summer weather. He sighed. What was he expecting? Of course a puny food stall wouldn't be here after all these years. Nonetheless, he was still disappointed. He kicked a pebble around as he walked, watching it roll down the sidewalk, slipping off of the ledge and ending up on the main road. He didn't even get the chance to say goodbye when he left — his departure was so rushed and last-minute.

At least the basketball court was still here, he smiled. He stood by the wired fence and watched a couple of teenagers take turns shooting at the hoop. The once green paint was now peeling and fading into a murky olive that was… less than appealing, to say the least. He was chuckling at one of the kids' pathetically failed dunks, when he heard the voice of an auntie.

"Curry fish balls! Freshly made every morning!"

Sure it wasn't Grandpa Lim selling them, but he couldn't deny how his stomach grumbled. He followed the over-the-top advertising to a little food stall, set up just like the cart that Grandpa Lim owned.

He handed the auntie five dollars. (Five dollars for one stick of fish balls! Talk about inflation!) Peter would've turned down the horrendously overpriced snack if not for the sake of nostalgia, but he still took his fish balls with a quiet "thank you" and a half-hearted smile.

He sunk his teeth into the fish ball skewered at the top, and the world shifted.

Suddenly, all the malls and towers around him shrunk back down to four-story residential buildings. Suddenly, he was back in his old basketball jersey. Suddenly, it was a Saturday afternoon and he was panting from all the running and dripping in sweat, but still snarfing down his fish balls on the side of the street.

Suddenly, he was a kid again.
He took another bite, and another, and soon enough, the entire stick was gone.
He licked the last of the sauce off of the crease in his ring finger, and Peter knew that he was back home.

CHUA MING HO LEROY: P4 STUDENT

My Grandfather, Pioneering the Art Scene in Singapore

My grandfather, Morgan Chua, is regarded as the "Legendary Cartoonist of Singapore" by Asiaweek.

He was among the first group of young men called up for national service in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) and has continued to contribute voluntarily on the illustrations for the Nation Pioneer, the official military magazine. "I will always serve my people and my country," he said.

His iconic covers for the Far Eastern Economic Review include the famous depiction of Hong Kong tycoon, Li Ka-shing as "Superman Li" in 1981.

In Singapore and before his passing, he collaborated closely with various publishers, inspiring many young cartoonists and illustrators, and published several books of cartoons that reflect both Singaporean culture and our leaders.

Although I met my grandfather only once, as a newborn, his art and illustrations have left a lasting impact, being featured in educational texts and reference books.

JAYMEE LO: S3 STUDENT

Singaporean Cuisine: Kaya Toast

As we celebrate SG60, let us look back on some key parts of Singapore's history - namely, elements of its unique cuisine.

First crafted in the 19th century, Kaya Toast has now become widely popular in Singapore, integrated as a classic breakfast dish, typically served with kopi and soft-boiled eggs. Kaya Toast consists of a sweet coconut jam or custard made with coconut cream, eggs and sugar, which is spread on toast. Peranakan-style kaya includes an added ingredient of pandan leaves, whereas Hainanese-style Kaya contains caramelised sugar.

As for the history of Kaya Toast, it is indeed an inspiring one. In the late 1800s, Hainanese immigrants became cooks and domestic servants for rich British, European and Peranakan families. Eventually, they set up kopitiams (coffee shops) and started serving Kaya Toast, resulting in its widespread popularity today.

YUXIN LYE (S3): ARMCHAIR SPECIALISTS

Changi Airport

Singapore's Changi Airport was named the best airport by Skytrax, not once, not twice but a grand total of 13th times. And if that doesn't sound impressive enough, Changi has been recognised with a staggering 704 awards to date, including the Platinum award this year from the Airports Council International for its outstanding work in sustainable energy and green initiatives.

So, what exactly makes Changi so impressive?

01 Architecture

Changi doesn't just have random plants tossed here and there to make things look more green. The following is an introduction to some of the most popular attractions at the Airport (that I'm sure all of you are also familiar with).

First and foremost, the legendary Rain Vortex, the tallest indoor waterfall on the planet, stands at 40 meters tall — that's taller than a 10-story building! This waterfall is powered by

rainwater they catch and recycle, pumping up to 10,000 gallons a minute. So, every drop you see crashing down against the glass is pure, harnessed nature. And no matter how many times I go back to visit, the Rain Vortex always takes my breath away.

Surrounding the waterfall is the Shiseido Forest Valley, home to thousands of trees and over 100,000 shrubs — a living, breathing ecosystem, meticulously designed to cool and purify the air around it.

And last but not least, a gigantic glass dome spanning nearly 200 meters across, letting sunlight pour in during the day and lighting up the Rain Vortex with silky reflections at night. It's an architectural marvel made of over 9,000 glass panels and 40,000 steel beams. Honestly, it feels less like an airport and more like a futuristic high-tech rainforest to me.

02 Sustainability

The sustainability efforts go way beyond just plants. Changi boasts the largest single-site rooftop solar panel system in Singapore, creating enough energy to power enough homes to cut down thousands of tonnes of carbon emissions every year. What's more, the airport doesn't waste a single drop of water. They harvest rainwater, and they do so so efficiently that it feeds all of their waterfalls and gardens.

Furthermore, all new airside vehicles—think forklifts, tractors, the whole fleet—will be 100% electric by 2025, supported by hundreds of EV charging points scattered all over the airport. If some vehicles still don't have electric alternatives, they will be powered by renewable diesel made from used cooking oil—yes! Frying oil powering airport vehicles!

The point is, Changi Airport is the perfect example for not just hoping for a greener future, but making it happen. Right now.
So next time you fly through Changi, remember, it's not just somewhere for you to catch your flights, it's a vision of the future and an architectural masterpiece that's worth visiting. People always say "the sky's the limit," but that's a bit confusing for an airport. At Changi, the sky isn't the limit, it's just the view from the canopy.

(get it? because skies and airports…)

CYRUS LEUNG (DP1): STUDENT PRESS

Kalie Liu's MUN: A Reflection

Model United Nations is a sport about as surreal as they come— when stripped down to its basic structure, it essentially involves trying to find solutions to some of the world's most complex issues, with various delegates who did not know your name, your birthday, or the school that you went to just 15 minutes ago.

And yet, why do so many find themselves revelling in the activity? Maybe it's due to its relentlessly collaborative, and immersive nature— delegates have to draft resolutions for issues selected by a chair, ranging from fiscal policy, to the UN's intervention in Sudan, to fantastical scenarios that involve establishing branches of government in the fictional nation of Nowhereland (true story!) Despite their differences, all these topics test the ability of delegates to negotiate, adapt, and reason with one another, finding common ground in a flood of differing opinions and ideals.

Some enjoy MUN 'for the love of the game', so to speak. They research laboriously to accurately play out the opinions and beliefs of their assigned delegate, and tinker with their opening address to make it sound as persuasive as possible.

But perhaps the most important part of it all— is in the worldview and the character that MUN builds within its participants. Children come out of two-day conferences mature thinkers, with a new lens of which to view the world. Though resolutions crafted are imaginary, the thoughts that they carry are not. All-and-all, the sport can really expand horizons.

This spirit is most exemplified in S2-6's Kalie Liu, who has participated in various competitions, representing the school in S1, and over the summer. She boasts an illustrious profile of awards— being the Best Delegate for the RENMUN, and being an honorably-mentioned delegate in the ISMUN.

The Student Press had the privilege of asking her a few questions about her accomplishments, experiences, and how she views the sport as a decorated veteran (despite her young age!). We wanted to know about what it took to become a 'good' delegate, and whether or not the sport could actually foster the paradigm-shifting development of young learners into experienced, confident thinkers that it promised.

The SP Team: How long have you been doing MUN? Can you recount stories about your first/previous competitions?

Kalie: 'I've been doing MUN since the start of S1, so it's been about 2 years now. My very first conference at CDNIS was by far my favourite, and even though I remember being terrified to speak during debate, I made amazing friends that I still keep in touch with. A big turning point came during my first year, at ISMUN, when I was unexpectedly awarded Most Improved Delegate. That was a time which encouraged me to take MUN more seriously and start researching, writing, and speaking with more confidence.'

The SP Team: Next, what qualities and traits are needed to make up a good MUN delegate? Is it any different from other styles of competitive speaking?

Kalie: A common perception of a good delegate is someone who can speak well and engage an audience. Though this can be extremely useful, a good delegate is also a person who listens, negotiates, and knows how to work with others. You need to be prepared, understand the topic, and know how to get people on your side. Some of the strongest delegates I've seen aren't necessarily the most outspoken. They know how to lead a bloc, stay calm under pressure, and think on their feet. Compared to other forms of competitive speaking like debate or public speaking, MUN is more community-driven. You're not trying to beat someone—you're trying to build something together, whether it's a resolution, a bloc, or a common understanding.

The SP Team: And lastly, what do you love most about MUN?

Kalie: Honestly, the people. MUN brings together students from all over Hong Kong and even the world who are passionate, curious, and driven. Every conference is a chance to meet someone new, learn something unexpected, or challenge your own perspective. I also love how every committee feels like its own little universe—you never know where the debate will go, and that unpredictability keeps me coming back.

Conclusions

MUN— though seeming 'unreal', is a sport as real as they come. Its resolutions may be fictional, but the bonds and skills it can build; understanding, being outspoken, and staying true to yourself, are essential to being an educated, active member of your community. Not to mention, it can provide similar-minded connections and friends that can challenge your perspective; in Kalie's case, driving her to remain an invested delegate. In the context of SG60, MUN honours the spirit of open communication and dialogue, reflecting the values of the meritocratic, honest, and discursive society Singapore has grown to be.

Thank you to Kalie for sharing her story with us! We're grateful to be able to document her thoughts and experiences.

XIN RU WU (S3): ARMCHAIR SPECIALISTS

Raffles

An illustration of Sir Stanford Raffles. Courtesy of britannica.com

I'm sure we've all heard the name "Stanford Raffles" and how he found Singapore. Let's dive deeper into how he has left such a profound impact on all Singaporeans, and why is he credited with the founding of modern Singapore.

First, who was Stamford Raffles? Sir Stamford Raffles was a British Colonial Officer who served from 1811-1816 and 1818-1824. He was born on the 5th of July in 1781, and died on the 5th of July in 1826. When he was 14, he began working as a clerk for the East India Company. In 1818, that was when he sailed to Malacca (a state in Malaysia) to secure a British presence, especially in Singapore. He arrived in Singapore on January 28, 1819 and thus began laying the foundation for modern Singapore.

Shortly after establishing Singapore as a British trading post, Raffles declared Singapore as a free port. This attracted traders, merchants and immigrants from every corner of the world, allowing Singapore to not only grow in population but also in economy and technology. Although he did not spend a long time in Singapore, he was a significant contributor to the legal system, the organisation of different districts and the education system.

How did he do this? Well firstly, he drafted a plan to turn Singapore into a modern city with bustling crowds and a booming economy. He separated the different ethnic groups in Singapore and gave them all housing, as well as establishing roads and schools. He started the administration of justice, abolishing activities such as gambling and slavery. Raffles also started an institution for the higher education of the Malay chiefs' sons and to teach the native languages of Singapore to the British officers. This institution was first called the Singapore Free School, but it is now known as the Raffles Institution. Sounds familiar? Great! Then the Raffles Hotel should also be a familiar name.

Well, the Raffles Hotel was actually founded much later after the death of Stamford Raffles. However, the hotel founders decided to name it after him, the founder of Singapore. Since it was affiliated with such a famous name, it soon attracted many tourists looking to discover East Asia.

So, not only can we see Sir Stamford Raffles's influence on Singapore's past, we can also see his influence and heritage in the Singapore we know and love today, including the Raffles Hotel, the Raffles Institution, named in his honour.

AMBER TAN (S3): ARMCHAIR SPECIALISTS

How Singapore has been able to become a cultural melting pot

In a study conducted by Pew research centre in 2014, Singapore was ranked as the most religiously diverse country in the world. Yet, how could this have been achieved by such a small territory?

Singapore's ethnic population can be sorted into five main groups: Chinese, Malays, Indians, Eurasians and others. It is considered a multi-ethnic society where multiple traditions blend into one under the guise of a Western cosmopolitan metropolis. This range of cultures caused Singapore to adopt no less than four official languages. English is considered the main medium, used frequently in schooling, commerce, and industry. Mandarin is another common language, taught to a third of the Singaporean school population, much to the benefit of the ethnic Chinese residents that make up 76.2% of Singapore's population. Tamil is also an important language, with 58% of Singapore's Indian population descending from Tamil ancestry. Last but not least, the national language of Singapore: Malaysian. The national anthem of Singapore, "Majulah Singapura", was originally written in Malay, and is, similarly to English, used for communication across ethnic groups. Its usage also emphasises Singapore's close bilateral relationship with Malaysia, and gives recognition to its brief period as one of Malaysia's 14 states from 1963 to 1965.

Singapore is recognised for offering many opportunities for jobs and housing for foreign workers, causing it to be attractive to migrant workers who come seeking employment and eventually settle down, bringing with them their own cultural traditions and practices, further expanding upon Singapore's assorted mix of ethnicities. Another benefit of Singapore that makes it appealing to migrants is its Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP), Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act, and the Presidential Council for Minority Rights, encouraging a diverse community and promoting daily interaction among different cultures, creating a harmonious society. Finally, Singapore has a Racial Harmony Day in order to promote cross-cultural and religious bonds, overcoming historical tensions.

In schools, children are taught the importance of understanding and respecting different cultures, with various lessons implemented in order to teach the heritage, traditions, accomplishments, and history of different ethnic groups. Singaporeans are further encouraged to celebrate one another's festivals and holidays, such as Chinese New Year, Deepavali, and Theemithi, or to collaborate in their own unique forms of art, music and cooking. This fosters a community built not on hatred, but a mutual consideration and esteem for each other's customs. Outside of school, the linguistic diversity of having four official languages inspires easy communication and inclusion. Singapore's EIP aids in the integration of ethnic mixes, preventing the formation of ethnic enclaves, while distinct neighbourhoods like Chinatown, Little India, and Arab Street serve as hubs for cultural expression. A final way diversity is encouraged is through food. Hawker centers serve a plethora of different meals, each with their own roots in respective cultures. Indeed, Singaporean Hawker centres are one of the best examples of fusion cuisine done right, with famous dishes such as hainanese chicken rice and chilli crab blending Chinese, Malay, and Indian flavours.

In conclusion, Singapore has managed to become a cultural melting pot through a combination of linguistic and cultural inclusivity, as well as its passing of laws beneficial to the cross-interactions of people from differing religions and ethnicities, embracing diversity and mutual respect.

MARCUS LUI (S4): CREATIVE WRITING CLUB

Walking Through the Singapore Botanic Gardens

"I knew you said it would be hot, but I wasn't expecting it to be this severe."

It's noon at the Singapore Botanic Gardens and even with fields of clouds in the sky, a rabid summer sun pulses its solar prowess into the lush scene of green below. Brown pansy butterflies are scattered across the greenery, the fluffy cotton buds on Kapok trees are still and silent amidst the lack of wind and a night jasmine has its petals pinched closed as if afraid of the sunlight.

"Not going to lie, I'm starting to regret coming here."

Ruby – a university student from overseas – is prey to the heat and fights demons to take every step, panting like every second she spends in the sunshine sucks the air out of her lungs. Yet, her penpal of 3 years, Chua Hong, is accustomed to the sweltering 34 degree temperature and walks stately beside her.

"You'll change your mind soon enough, I know you will," Chua Hong retorts while passing a bottle of water from her backpack to Ruby, "Drink up Rubes, you look like you need it."

"Oh, you are a godsend," Ruby chugs a quarter of the bottle before wiping her mouth and continuing to rant her skepticism, "I still don't get why you brought me here, this climate is unbelievable."

"Because you told me you wanted to 'experience Singapore's culture', and the Botanic Gardens is one of the best ways to do it," Chua Hong explained, "There's so much you can learn about our history here, look over there!"

She points at a tree in the distance that's as tall as a 4 storey building. It towers above patches of herbs and flowering bushes and has a crown of organized chaos on the top of its trunk; of leaves, branches and twigs.

"Great, so I travelled halfway across the globe to see a tree." Ruby muttered sarcastically.

"Oh shut up, that's a Para Rubber Tree," Chua Hong stated, darting a judgemental glance at her doubtful friend, "In the late 19th century, a botanist called Henry Ridley came from the UK to Singapore and innovated ways to harvest greater yields of rubber from these trees without damaging them, transforming Singapore into a commercial powerhouse for rubber."

"That's nice and all, but I still don't get what's so special about this."

"Well, his discovery, along with Singapore's flora-thriving climate and prime trading location, skyrocketed the commercial potential of rubber here. So many of the world's rubber trees

actually descend from those planted here in Singapore. Now, we're able to use rubber for so many things, like car tires, shoe soles, gloves – and what do we have here?" Chua Hong's eyes are gleaming as she reaches behind Ruby's head to take off the hairband, unbounding her ponytail.

"Hey!"

"I'll give it back if you tell me what it's made of."

Ruby pauses, not just to think, but also in understanding.

"Rubber."

The ends of her mouth curving into a grin, Chua Hong hands the hairband back to Ruby, who leaves her hair down and places her hands on her hips, surprised.

Along the Rainforest Trail of the Botanic Gardens, brown tree snails in the canopies quicken their crawls and mounds of coffee-coloured leaf litter rustle with the movement of semi-slugs. As the sun passes its peak, the shadows of tree trunks lengthen and there is a new barely perceptible breeze that purls through the tropical ecosystem. There's a faint, crisp crackling of branches in the background.

"Anything else you can tell me about?"

Chua Hong maintains her smile. Seeing her friend starting to be convinced fuels her to continue, "Follow me."

The pair walk towards the Botanic Garden's National Orchid Garden and as they stand under a hedge arch, Ruby gasps at the vivid, almost explosive scene in front of her. Orchids of all shapes and sizes, all colours and patterns, are generously planted along the sides of the cobblestone pathway. Some shoot straight out of the ground, some are latched onto the gristly barks of trees, and others twirl and coil around bamboo lattices. They come in brimming, textured bunches and are like splotches of paint on the palette of an artist who has lost the concept of overcolouring. It's a polychromatic wonderland.

"Wow…" Ruby is speechless, mouth agape and eyes wide.

"Amazing, right?" Chua Hong exclaims excitedly, "But there's a whole other level of diversity behind their appearances."

Chua Hong guides Ruby's attention to a pair of white Phalaenopsis philippinensis growing on a verdant moss-covered tree trunk.

"These orchids originated from the Philippines and came to Singapore through trade."

Ruby shakes her head, "What are you trying to tell me?"

"Give it a while to set in," Chua Hong continues to point at new orchids.

"Check out these red ones with 5 petals, they originate all the way from Japan and are even named after a Japanese Emperor,"

"These purple ones with fan-shaped petals come from China,"

"These Spider Orchids come from the Americas,"

"These Tiger Orchids that have roots in Malaysia and Indonesia."

Ruby stops Chua Hong before her brain cannot process any more information, "So you're saying that the orchids are diverse in where they originated from?"

"Exactly!" Chua Hong clasps her hands, "Now this one you must see."

She crouches down to a bundle of long green stems speckled with orchids, resplendent in pink to white gradients.

"Vanda Miss Joaquims."

The name sounds familiar to Ruby, "Chua Hong, these are Singapore's national flowers, right?"

"Yep," Chua Hong affirms, "They're actually hybrids too, meaning they were created through cross-breeding different species of orchids. These little fellows are of both Myanmar and Filipino descent."

Hanging from their stems, the pink orchids rest, quiet and unmoving. Ruby still has her head tilted and eyebrows furrowed, "So what about Singapore's culture?"

"Isn't it obvious? Connect the dots, Ruby!" Chua Hong asks incredulously, "The orchids' places of origin reflect Singapore's kaleidoscope of cultures, from Southeast Asia and beyond,"

The sun is beginning to set and a blast of warm hues fly out from the edge of the horizon. Nocturnal palm civets and monitor lizards twitch ever so slightly in their slumber.

"We have people here that are Chinese, Malay, Indian, British, just to name a few of the many different ethnicities in Singapore," Chua Hong remarks proudly, "And I love my home for it! I've met so many interesting people and experienced so many rich traditions throughout my

life because of the cosmopolitan environment I was raised in. Even with so many cultures meshed together under one hot, humid roof, no one culture ever loses its time in the spotlight since we try very hard to make sure every single one is treated with respect and receive the recognition they deserve."

Ruby stares in admiration at Chua Hong against the backdrop of bustling trees, bushes, stems and orchids that all seem to carry the same multicultural pride.

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The sky is dark and devoid of clouds now, paving way for a bright gibbous moon to shine bright and unimpeded. Enjoying a pleasant night breeze, Ruby and Chua Hong have been sitting on a bench in the botanic gardens discussing more aspects of Singapore while the rest of the country was deep in sleep. The light chirping of nocturnal birds can be heard coming from far away, up in the treetops. Away from their notice, a small cluster of gentle bioluminescent mushrooms hide beneath their sitting and at the sides of the bench, night jasmines are in bloom, awakened from their somnambulance.

"Singapore, is honestly one of the coolest places I have ever visited."

Illustration of the Botanic Garden at night.
Courtesy of Sharon Sable
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3. Passing the Torch

"Our most important responsibility is to the future, to make sure that Singapore can make progress, to make sure that our children are well prepared, to make sure our economy is strong and Singapore is well defended."

Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister

DU XIAONAN: PARENT OF DU HAOYU, PY2

SG30-SG60: The Cycle of Life

As Singapore moves forward, so do we.

SG30 in Jurong, a child with my father.
SG40 in NUS, chasing dreams in the hostel.
SG50 at INSEAD and Bishan, building my own path.
SG60 in Marina Bay, now a father myself.

Life is a cycle, ever turning, ever moving. I am deeply grateful to have grown alongside Singapore, witnessing and participating in the extraordinary transformation of the past 30 years — a journey of resilience, hope, and endless possibilities.

DU HAOYU: PY2 STUDENT

Happy Birthday Singapore!

I drew this picture for Singapore's 60th birthday! I'm jumping high because I'm so happy, and Merli is riding a little SG60 train. There are fireworks, flags, and all my favorite places like Marina Bay, Gardens by the Bay, the Singapore Flyer, the parks and the HDBs. I hope Singapore will always be happy and full of colors, just like my drawing!

SERENE LEUNG (DP1): CREATIVE WRITING CLUB

Merlion

Daughter of the sea,
how does it feel to be you?
Poised on that rough shore,
earthbound, austere;
do you ever yearn for the freedom of the water?

Your years of fervour are long gone
A mane once the colour of a fiery sun
now faded to a pristine white.
Fixing that frigid gaze upon us,
as though you were our ruler.

So you perch, cast in concrete
over the river you had once belonged to
and in those waters, catch a glimpse of your reflection
a chalk-borne beast.

DU XIAONAN: PARENT

SG60 NDP: One Voice, One Flag, One Singapore

SG60 NDP: One Voice, One Flag, One Singapore

Amid the sea of red and white, my heart swells with pride for the home we have built together. United in spirit, ready for the future.

SG60: Healthy, Happy, and Homely

SG60: Healthy, Happy, and Homely

For Singapore's 60th birthday, my wish is simple yet timeless, that we continue to grow as both a family and a nation, where every spirit is strong and kind, every smile sincere and heartwarming, and every home filled with health and happiness.

LEE HO YIN DIANA: ALUMNI & PARENT — GRADUATED IN 1998

Our SISHK Story Nurturing Two Generations

Our SISHK Story:
- Dr. Diana Lee (Alumni, Graduation Year 1998),
- Dr Jacqueline Lee (Alumni, Graduation Year 1996),
- Elliot (PY1, 2024),
- Issac (PY1, 2025)

Our Past: SISHK nurtures 2 little sisters to society pillars - Specialist in Obstetrics and Gynaecology
Our Future: The heritage continues forging our next generation

Photo 1995: Diana and Jacqueline in SISHK sports day
Photo 1996: SISHK school band performance
Photo 2016: Fellowship conferment ceremony as specialists in Obstetrics and Gynaecology
Photo 2023: SISHK Family Fiesta
Photo 2025: Diana going to school with Elliot

THEA CHAN (S2) & JAYNE CHIN (S2): SECONDARY STUDENTS

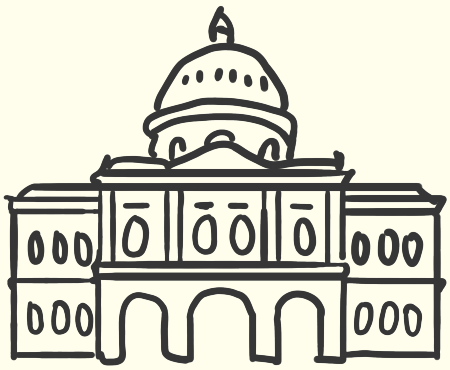
Six Decades of Singapore

In the last sixty years, Singapore has evolved from a modest trading hub to a major world economic power, thanks in large part to its resilience and sense of community. When the country achieved independence in 1965, it was confronted with huge challenges, such as the absence of natural resources and a multicultural, multilingual population.

Led by its inaugural Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore has visioned a way in which it prioritized industrialization alongside social cohesion. It instituted policies in a bid to make communities more involved and inclusive, thereby making each citizen feel that he or she had a stake in the country's advancement. Housing programs, education systems, and healthcare were established with the aim of integrating a multicultural society, emphasizing the importance of the common good.

The resilience of the Singaporean populace was evaluated amid economic recessions and global adversities; however, Singaporeans repeatedly united, demonstrating their capacity for adaptability and resolve. Presently, Singapore is celebrated for its elevated quality of life and innovative contributions, which epitomize the robustness of its communal ethos.

Against future challenges such as climate change and globalization, Singapore continues to tap its tradition of resilience and solidarity from the past, thereby strengthening itself as a model of sustainable development and social cohesion for the world.



LAURENE NG: P6 STUDENT

SG60 Acrostic Poem

Singapore: my home
In my heart forever
Never giving up hope
Going stronger every year
Always full of kindness
Proud to be Singaporean
Open-mindedness is the way
Resilience through challenges
Extraordinary place to call home

DU HAOYU: PY2 STUDENT

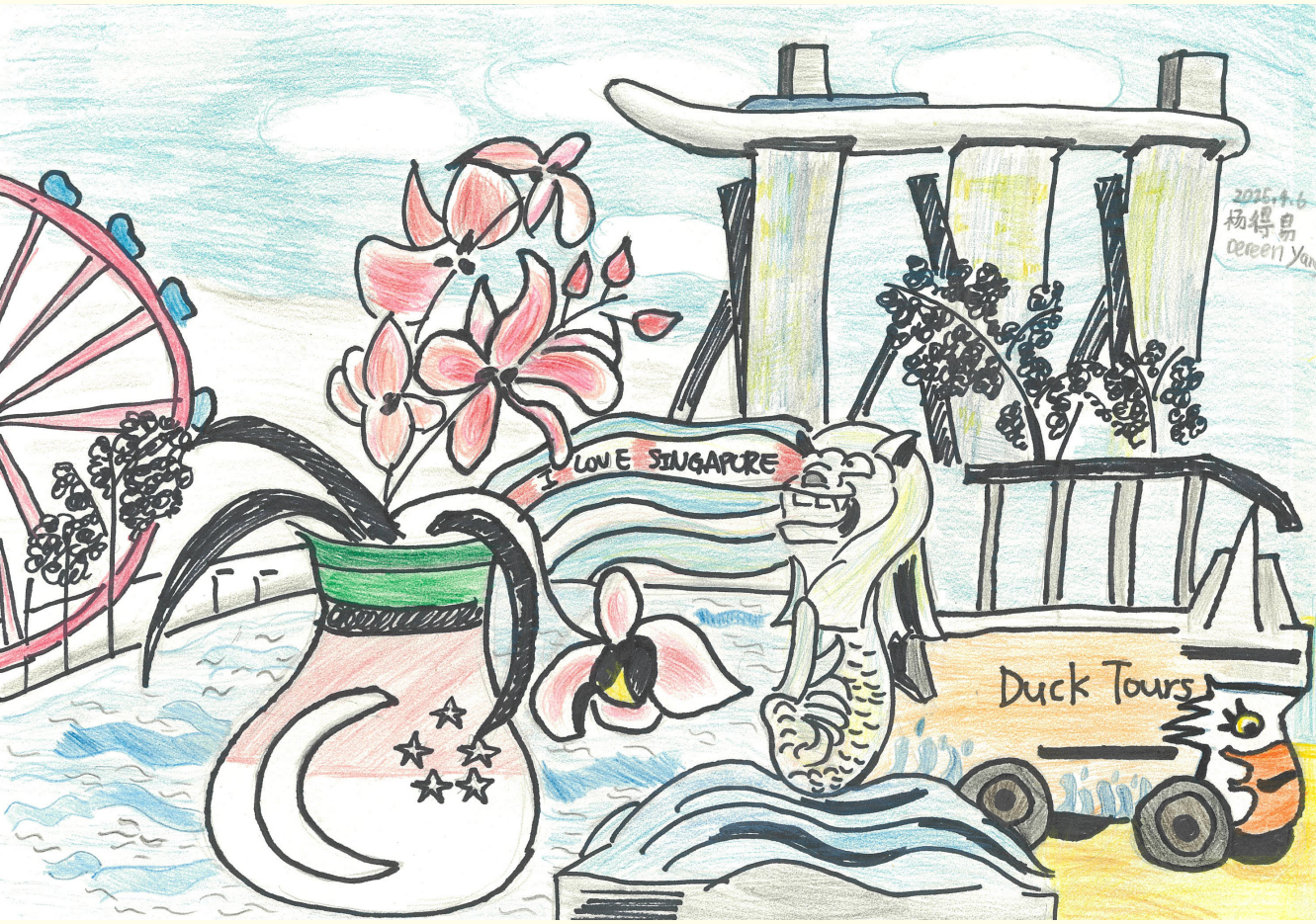
Singapore Trip with Merli and Toffee

Last December, I went to Singapore! I walked around Gardens by the Bay and Marina Bay Sands. I met Toffee at the Singapore Zoo. I saw the Merlion spitting water. It was so funny! I drew a plane and made it fly on the wall at the Singapore Art Museum. And at night, I watched fireworks from my home at Marina Bay.

"I love Singapore and can't wait to come back for the SG60 celebration!"

YANG DEYI: P3 STUDENT

My Singapore My Home



I love my country, although I'm staying overseas. I miss you! Singapore is always in my heart. The Red Dot is shining shining forever. I wish my country is enjoying a period of peace and prosperity.

"Good luck, Singapore!"

LIANG QISHENG: P2 STUDENT

Bubble to Singapore

The bubble shaped like a heart means love. The bubble can take my love flying from Hong Kong to Singapore. There is a clothe inside the bubble which is coloured in red and white. Around the bubble, there are lots of happy monsters which represents love, happiness, yummy food, and people from different countries.

"It's my present to Singapore for her 60th birthday."

TIAN GLORIA: P3 STUDENT

Our Home

Our home with squirrel family.

ELEANOR ZHANG JINYU: P2 STUDENT

Prime Minister Reception in Beijing

I was in Beijing for summer holiday and coincides with Prime Minister Lawrence Wong's first official visit to Beijing after election and attended the reception for overseas Singaporeans. Singapore and Greater China have strong ties across many aspects.

"I felt proud to be a Singaporean and look forward to contributing to the national development."

TERRENCE CHOCK: PARENT OF ISABELLA CHOCK, P1

Run in at Changi Airport

Current SISHK PY2 Kids visiting classmates who returned to Singapore at Changi, also ran into Principal Yoong!

Singapore International School (Hong Kong) in 1991

Singapore International School (Hong Kong) was established in September 1991 with the steadfast backing of Singapore's Ministry of Education. When it moved to its current premises in Aberdeen, it did so on land granted by the Hong Kong government, with the edifice funded by the Singapore Government. As the only Singapore-style international school in Hong Kong, it carves out a unique identity by bringing the Singaporean spirit to the cosmopolitan energy of Hong Kong; and as Singapore celebrates 60 years of independence, it reminds us that we are, verily, all of us, somewhere in that story, and that we are fortunate to call both Hong Kong and Singapore our home.

SG 60

新加坡国际学校(香港)
SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL (HONG KONG)
EST. 1997

Children's Wishing Well